

Stanley C. Blaker: uh.. terrific. I- I had debutants. Boy, I'll tell ya, Daddy paid for the boo-- you know, I was only gettin'36-- \$56 a month, you know. And that's not an awful lot of money to- to go ashore at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel. And some of those girls were very, very, very charming. And uh.. uh.. I did very well with 'em <chuckles>.

<crew talk>

Q: The following oral history interview was conducted by Commander Judith LeFleur of the National Naval Historical Center and <clears throat> Mr. Jack Green, historian, from the Naval Historical Center for the National Park Service USS Arizona Memorial at the Alamo Moana Hotel in Honolulu, Hawaii on December 6, 2001 at 8:05 p.m. The person interviewed is Stanley C. Baker who was a Seaman First Class at NAS Ford Island VP-24 on December 7, 1941. Can you hear me okay?

Stanley C. Blaker: Mm-mm.

Q: Okay. Good evening.

Stanley C. Blaker: Good evening.

Q: For the record, would you please state your name, your place of birth and the date of birth.

Stanley C. Blaker: Stanley C. Blaker, Chicago, Illinois and I born on September 8, 1922.

Q: Okay. And what did you consider to be your hometown in 1941?

Stanley C. Blaker: Chicago.

Q: Okay. And what were your parents' names?

Stanley C. Blaker: I'm sorry.

Q: What were your parents' names?

Stanley C. Blaker: Well, Ed- Edward T. Blaker and uh.. uh.. Gladys Blaker.

Q: And how many brothers and sisters did you have?

Stanley C. Blaker: I had two sisters.

Q: Okay.

Stanley C. Blaker: One older, one younger.

Q: Where did you go to high school?

Stanley C. Blaker: Oh boy, I went to Neutra [ph?] High School my first year. My second year, the first half, I went to uh.. Kentucky Military Institute. The second half of the- the second year, I went to Well-- and uh...

<crew talk>

Q: Okay, now you were saying that you started college and you had a- a professor who spoke with a German accent.

Stanley C. Blaker: Yeah, an- and-- yes. His-- between his accent and his slurring everything through his beard, I just couldn't understand him. So I decided there's no sense in me spending my money to do nothing but sleep. So I quit and I went down and joined the Navy December-- uh.. uh.. it took me a long time to get in the Navy because I had bad teeth. And I didn't know until I got in the Navy that my uncle, who was my dentist, who was very cheap, I guess, to my dad, uh.. he- he didn't believe in Novocain in the first place. So he would drill down until it hurt and then he'd fill it. And I lost two teeth while I was still in boot camp at Great Lakes <laughs>.

Q: So whe- when exactly was it that you went into the Navy? Do you remember?

Stanley C. Blaker: Yes, December 16, 1940.

Q: And you went into training? You went to boot camp? You went into boot camp? And where did...

Stanley C. Blaker: Yeah, at Great Lakes.

Q: And where'd you go after boot camp?

Stanley C. Blaker: Uh.. I happened to have a high school education. In those days, that was a pretty big thing, so they asked me what did I wanted to be. And I-- so I found out that the only way you could become an aviation pilot in the Navy was to have an aviation rank. So I wanted to go to aviation radi-- uh.. machinist's mate school. But that was in Corpus Christi and I was uh.. going with a girl in Chicago who lived in Los Angeles. So I went to aviation and radio school because it was in- <laughs> in San Diego, which is kind of stupid 'cause I never saw the girl again <laughs>. But uh.. that's how I got into the radio school <laughs>.

Q: Okay. Okay. And where did you go? How long were you in radio school?

Stanley C. Blaker: Well, I was at North Island, the radio school, for what, I don't know, two months, something like that, three months. And uh.. then they shipped me to uh.. VP-12, which is right on the same- same island, V-uh.. VPY Squadron. And I- I remember I was on a beach crew. And oh, then they put me training-- uh.. uh.. teaching the code to the new reservists that were just comin' in <chuckles>. And some of these was guys who were first class and here I am a first class seaman and they're getting \$60 a month and I'm gettin' <chuckles> 36 or \$56 a month. And I'm training them how to do the code, you know. <laughs> it didn't seem reason- reasonable to me.

Q: You're talking about the Morse Code, correct?

Stanley C. Blaker: I did what I was supposed to do.

<overlapping conversation>

Q: I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to interrupt you.

Stanley C. Blaker: I said I- I did whatever they told me to do. And uh.. then I found out that uh.. some-- one of the guys got a leave. And I said, "How'd you do that?" He said, "Well, I just put in for it." So I went up and put in for a leave and they gave me 20 days leave. When I went home to Chi- Chicago, I didn't have enough <laughs> money in my pocket to pay the nickel snatcher to go from- from <chuckles> North Island over to- over to San Diego. And I borrowed a nickel and I wired home for money. And they sent me enough money to get home, but they didn't realize I had to eat too. So- so I uh.. finally got a car uh.. that was going that way and I drove it all the way. And I beat the- I beat the- uh.. uh.. the uh.. Super Chief in by two hours. <clears throat> and I- I, you know-- my dad was down there waiting for the tra-- at the train and I wasn't on it 'cause I was home already <laughs>.

Q: And how long- how long after that-- so you were home for, what, 20 days leave?

Stanley C. Blaker: I went...

Q: How much leave did you have?

Stanley C. Blaker: I'm sorry.

Q: How much leave did you leave home?

Stanley C. Blaker: I had 20 days.

Q: Twenty days.

Stanley C. Blaker: So I...

Q: Now, when you-- if I could just ask you to clarify something, when you said you- you were teaching the other- the other shipmates, your-- the code, you're talking about the Morse Code, correct?

Stanley C. Blaker: Morse Code, yeah.

Q: Okay. And then- and then you went back to the ship after you-- well, back to the squadron after your leave.

Stanley C. Blaker: Yeah.

Q: And- and were you at the same squadron at that time?

Stanley C. Blaker: Oh yeah. Oh, sure. And they shipped me right up to the Navy-- uh.. uh.. up to the mess hall as- as a Navy cook-- you know, as a Navy chef, you know. What do they call it? What do they call that?

Q: A cook.

Stanley C. Blaker: Chef.

Q: Or a mess- mess specialist?

Stanley C. Blaker: A mess duty, yeah, mess duty. <clears throat> and I stayed there until we left for Honolulu. And we left on the USS Regal, which was an old- an old World War II-- uh.. I uh.. ship that had been tied to the dock for, I don't know, like 14 or 15 years as a receiving ship for the band members. And the only time it kept it- it kept its commission because every year a tug would tow it out to sea until it came back in again <laughs> as it commissioned. And we painted the--well, we- we did our- our plane duty or plane watch for our squadron. Now, we only had six airplanes. We had just been issued new planes and they were PBY-5As, which were amphibians. And uh.. we had V-- you know, PBY-3s before. And uh.. we only had six of them. But they took off finally uh.. and they stayed uh.. extra days 'cause it was raining <laughs>. I mean this is a-- and we had to stay out there 15 days, it took the Regal to get to- to uh.. uh.. Pearl Harbor because we'd stay three days in one spot waiting for them to fly over. And then we'd stay three days in another spot and wait <chuckles> for them to fly over. 'Course, this was before the war so we didn't have to worry about white lights or anything. But we painted the ward officer's uh.. ward- uh.. ward room-- the ward officer's ward room, I think, three different colors on that ship <laughs>. All he did was keep us busy painting. And when...

Q: When did you-- I'm sorry. When did you arrive in Pearl...

Stanley C. Blaker: But it took our planes 24 hours to fly from San Diego to Pearl Harbor. And they had to take the bunks out in order to make room for extra gas tanks. So you can imagine what an ordeal this was. It's just unheard of <chuckles>.

Q: Now, when di-- when was it that you arrived in Pearl Harbor?

Stanley C. Blaker: I think it was in September 18th if I'm not mistaken. But I-- you know, I can't swear to that but uh.. pretty close.

Q: Of 1941?

Stanley C. Blaker: Yeah, 1941.

Q: And then you were assigned to which squadron when you arrived there?

Stanley C. Blaker: Well, that's-- yeah, I was still a radio striker, is what they call it. And we- we weren't rated yet. We were striking for a rate. And I worked in a radio shaft and I did-- uh.. uh.. I uh.. uh.. beached airplanes and so forth. And on December 6th...

Q: You were at VP-24 at that time?

Stanley C. Blaker: Yeah, VP-24. We used to be VP-12 in San Diego. When we got to uh.. Honolulu, they changed it to VP-24. And VP-24, which was at-- at Pearl Harbor at that time moved over to Kaneohe Bay as VP-12. I don't who they were confusing. They were confusing us a lot more than they were <chuckles> the Japs, I think.

Q: So what kind of aircraft did you have in VP-24?

Stanley C. Blaker: PBY-5As.

Q: So it was the 5As?

Stanley C. Blaker: Amphibians, yeah.

Q: Okay. Okay, and what- what were your duties then? You were a striker for a radioman?

Stanley C. Blaker: I was striking for radiomen. And we were-- repaired radios and so forth. And we didn't have too much to do because we-- everything was moved, you know. <laughs> not many things was gone bad. But uh.. we beached aircraft. We did everything that we had to be-- do-- done, you know. And the squadron was very small compared to-- you know, we only had six airplanes. That's half a squadron.

Q: Okay, now these-- the PB-- the aircraft used to fly out and do patrol daily or...

Stanley C. Blaker: Well, in those days, uh.. yes, uh.. they did. We drew in most of the patrols because we were the new guy on the block. And VP-22 was a-- uh.. I think it was down at Midway. And they- they were all over the place. I didn't know where they were. But we- <chuckles> we drew most of the patrols <clears throat>.

Q: Now where did they-- where did they take off in the harbor to do their patrols, do you remember?

Stanley C. Blaker: I'm sorry, what?

Q: Where did they take off in the harbor to do their patrols? Do you...

Stanley C. Blaker: Oh, they'd just take off right- right down the middle of the harbor. I mean uh.. it depends on which way the wind was blowing uh.. left or right. Uh.. uh.. we were-- the ramp went down and the planes got-- and the- the...

Q: And they'd just turn around right there and take off depending on the direction?

Stanley C. Blaker: Yeah, sure. You know, they'd start to take off right away.

<crew talk>

Q: Now, you said you had the brand new PBV-5As. You know, they're the only dash 5As at Pearl Harbor at the time?

Stanley C. Blaker: Yeah.

Q: Because all the other photographs I see they're just dash five, these three...

Stanley C. Blaker: Well, uh.. uh.. there were a few fives, yeah. But we had the only 5As.

Q: Now, as a- a radioman-- aviation radioman, how often were you on the flying schedule? Did you fly every other day or once a week?

Stanley C. Blaker: Well, I- I didn't-- at that time, I wasn't flying at all 'cause I was- I was ground crew.

Q: So you basically just worked in the shop. You were doing back shop.

Stanley C. Blaker: And I- I don't remember-- you know, it's kinda hard to remember which days we had the duty. I know it was every-- at least every third day. And sometimes less, sometimes more. But I'm pretty sure it was pretty close to every third day.

Q: Now, did you specialize in command and liaison sets or did you...

Stanley C. Blaker: No, no, no. We-- uh.. uh.. the funny-- I think the-- one of the funniest things, they put radar on our planes after we got there. And we were-- our- our first plane to have that. We had one- one plane, the skipper's plane. We couldn't get the radar to work. And finally, after-- we worked on it, oh, day after day and we couldn't get it. And finally, they shipped a Lieutenant uh.. Colonel, I think he was, all the way from England. He flew in there. He cut off about that much of the antenna and it worked fine <laughs>. I mean that- I mean that's three quarters of an inch <chuckles>.

Q: And- and when did you get the radar in there, do you remember?

Stanley C. Blaker: Oh, the radar was-- well, right after-- well, it was-- I don't remember if it was after or before Pearl Harbor we got it in there <chuckles> anyway-- I can't remember.

Q: Right before- right before Pearl Harbor? Well, probably afterwards, I would guess.

Stanley C. Blaker: Well, no, I think probably the plane- the plane was hooked with radar after Pearl Harbor.

Q: After Pearl Harbor, yeah. Okay. Now, how have you-- so you had arrived in September. So you were-- you had been in Pearl Harbor roughly four months before the attack takes place. Now, that Saturday, December 6th, did you have duty that day or did you have liberty?

Stanley C. Blaker: Uh.. no, we had duty. We- we had- we had to fly patrol the next morning. We had- we had four planes in the air at 6:00 in the morning on December 7th.

Q: Were you-- did you have duty on the 6th?

Stanley C. Blaker: No, we had-- we came-- well, we all-- uh.. the whole squadron-- when-- when that flew, everybody was on duty.

Q: Was it an all day thing?

Stanley C. Blaker: It was what?

Q: Was it an all day duty?

Stanley C. Blaker: Oh, yeah, like 12, 14 hours we patrolled, you know. They- they were- they were out that long. And uh.. uh.. <coughs> we- we launched the planes. But instead of being on patrol, they were dropping messages on our own submarines up in the harbor of Kauai or one of the harbors. I don't

know which one it was but-- by a new message drop that was top secret. Uh.. <chuckles> it's so simple, it's pathetic. We had a 200 foot long length of- of uh.. uh.. garden-- uh.. what do you call it, uh.. uh.. what do you call that-- uh.. laundry line, you know, that you hang your laundry on.

Q: Closes line? Clothes line.

Stanley C. Blaker: Clothes line. And uh.. at one end was a sealed container, at the other end was a block of two by four. And they would string it out the tail hatch of our plane, fly over the- the destination and drop it. And it'd uh.. drape over and they'd pull it in. They had a top secret message. And uh.. that's what they were practicing at the time <coughs>. But uh.. uh.. so they-- in fact, the second radioman or the radioman-- the first radioman on the skipper's plane was flying it. And he was a friend of mine and I asked him about the-- when they came back in, I said, uh.. "Was it-- what happened?" He said, "Well, we-- I got the message that Pearl Harbor was being bombed." And he said, "I handed it to the skipper." He says, "Boy, they said it with the sound of-- make it sound realistic. The last day of these maneuvers, they're really making it sound <chuckles> realistic."

Q: And that was on the 6th?

Stanley C. Blaker: That-- well, then it came back again and so, they all just went down to the submarine. Do you get this message? Yes. So they said, "Ask him if- <chuckles> if it's true." So we ask him in plain language, "Are you telling me the truth?" And boy, you should have heard the language <laughs>. He had written down and I- I can't use it on this kind of program. But it was-- as you-- uh.. the poor guy was-- uh.. the fella next to him was dead and he's operating two keys and this guy's asking, is it true, you know. It- it didn't- didn't really take it <chuckles> apparently too good. But uh...

Q: When were you first aware of the attack? When- when-- what happened?

Stanley C. Blaker: Well, <clears throat> we were in a squadron waiting for 8:00 quarters or muster or whatever you wanna call it. And uh.. we heard a plane on a dive. Well, everyone in the squadron ran to the rear door. I don't know why I went to the front door of the hanger but I did. And I got there just in time for the first explosion of the war. I mean I was on Ford Island and it was right across from me about 250 feet.

Q: What hanger here, number one?

Stanley C. Blaker: In-- yeah, in hanger-- yeah. And uh.. it was right in the middle of three Dutch PBYS that we had beached the night before. I think they were Dutch. I don't know. They had those kinda markings. And they were a- a PBY-5s and they were-- on their way through. They didn't get very far 'cause they were completely gone. And the guy that was in that hanger over there was injured. And I have never heard from him since and I don't know what happened to him. Lowell Applegate was his name and he <clears throat> he was-- went through boot camp with me. <clears throat> he was in VP-20-- 23, I think. And they were all down at Midway and he was left here. But he had- he had to stand watch, you know, <chuckles> of the hanger. And uh.. so uh.. anyway, I turned around and a squadron is trying to get firefighting equipment 'cause I thought the plane had crashed. I didn't know that it was a bomb. And uh.. everybody was headed for the back door of that hanger. But me-- and I can't get that equipment out there by myself, especially <chuckles> when the hanger doors only- only open about a foot and a half. And it-- uh.. you know, these doors were two stories high. They- they're not- they're not easy to- uh.. to move. So uh.. uh.. then another explosion took place and I thought, "Oh, my God, those planes- those planes are exploding out there. I'm not going." So I headed toward the back door too. And as I go there, our leading chief, Sy Sellers, was too fat to get through the door. We could not get him through. Another guy and I, uh.. we tried push-- finally, we took him and threw him out of the- the metal uh.. uh.. shop <chuckles> window. We got him out there. And then, this fellow and- and I went out and then when- when off in my right. And I looked up and I saw these planes with white-- or was it uh.. red spots and I-- what- what are they, you know. I think the only- the only war I knew that was going on was with Spain <laughs>. So everybody was going over-- right along Luke Field, which ran a length, I think. There was a ditch for a new sewage line or something. And that was seven or eight feet deep. Some of the guys went in head first, broke their backs and so forth, I mean really in trouble. I went in head-- uh.. uh.. my foot first. And uh.. this is where we stayed. And uh.. the bullets-- I mean the- the-- they had dropped their subma-- their bombs and so forth. And then they come on machine gun on us and- and the planes. They were trying to destroy all of the aircraft, of course. And uh.. we were laying down into the back of the ditch. And they'd spit dirt in our face. So when the first attack was over, uh.. we got out and we turned our planes that were on the ramp uh.. so that- that our-- uh.. they were facing uh.. the other way so that our- our ordinance man can get into the- the center of the plane where we had our- our 50 caliber machine guns and they could use them because we had nothing else. In fact, about three weeks before the attack, the Army had

put a- a uh.. anti-aircraft gun between our ramps, you know, right outside between the two-- and I talked to these guys. They said, "Oh, yeah, we're gonna be here." They were off on Sunday <laughs>.

Q: Well, you mentioned that the hanger doors were hard to move. How did you normally open them?

Stanley C. Blaker: With a tractor, you know, or uh.. 400 men <laughs>.

Q: Exactly, right. And then you were talking about uh.. the ditch and- and...

Stanley C. Blaker: The what?

Q: The ditch that you jumped into to protect yourself and- and everybody else jumped in and there were a number of injured people...

Stanley C. Blaker: Well, the- the injuries all took place with broken legs or broken ankles or-- one fellow went in head first and he did get uh.. some vertebra broken back here. But uh.. uh.. all in all it was a lot safer <laughs> being on that squad-- uh.. up- up above because they were machine gunning us badly <coughs>.

Q: And then when you came back out and you got the aircraft positioned so it could use it...

Stanley C. Blaker: Well, we got them done. And then I was ordered to go up and get cigarettes at the ship-- at- at the ship service, which is a Lanai-- it's on a Lanai around the barracks. And I got there and I had to step over all of these bodies that were laying there. I mean some of 'em were moaning and some of 'em were dead and some of 'em weren't. And I mean that's not my orders. I'm not supposed to be a corpsman. And so, I- I got-- I went onto the ship service and I said, "I want four cartons of cigar"-- "Take whatever you want, no charge." And I went back. And I was heading back and the second wave came in. And I was just across the street going by this building. And I didn't know what it was but it was an armory. And a guy grabbed me by the arm and pulled me in and pulled down a steal door, handed me a 45 caliber pistol and a- uh.. uh.. and a holster and uhm.. so forth. "Clean it, it's yours." So I cleaned it. And as soon as I did, I left 'cause I thought it was over, the

second attack. Well, I got back and <laughs> I headed for that ditch and this- this guy's coming back. I looked up and I could see his gritty goddamn teeth smiling at me as he's machine gunning me. But he missed <laughs>. And I got into the ditch again. And <inaudible> that's the- that's the whole thing, you know. And that-- by that time, the war is over I mean as far as we're concerned. We didn't know it but-- and that night they put me on a- a 30 caliber machine gun on the edge of a field, on a tripod. Uh.. I had eight to 12 watch. And at that time, you wouldn't believe it, these guys are all testing their guns all the time. Why are they testing their guns? Everybody knew the guns worked, you know. But they- they-- one guy would open up testing it and oh, my Lord, the whole place would open up, just absolutely-- and then they came around and warned us that- that the Enterprise, I think it was coming back, uh.. if he's-- were coming in, six planes. I never fired a shot but everybody else did. And I got news for you. They're-- a- a fly couldn't have flown through that flack. The one guy that lived out of that six planes, he landed on- on Ford Island and he got down safely but his plane was a real mess. And it was really bad, this uh...

Q: Friendly fire.

Stanley C. Blaker: Uh.. yeah, it wasn't <laughs>. They call it friendly fire? <clears throat> but they-- you never seen such people. They were just comp-- jittery, just- just-- everybody was so jittery. It was pathetic.

Q: When we- when we went to see the movie, "Pearl Harbor," I was very interested in one man's comment, a- a Pearl Harbor survivor that I happened to hear when he was being interviewed walking by. He said-- "How did you-- what did you think of the movie?" He said, "Well, it gave me a chance to see everything that happened. I didn't know what was happening 'cause I was doing my job." <laughs> And this is about ev-- all of us. You know, we didn't know what was goin' on. When they-- when the bomb went into the Arizona-- now we were about a mile away from the Arizona on Ford Island. I said-- I estimated. I don't know. I never measured it. But uh.. it shook the ground so bad that we got piles of dirt on us. I mean it just came out of the walls. It just-- so- so tremendous, you can't believe how- how much-- and that atomic bomb is a- a-- the only expression I could think of that might be equal to it 'cause it was a lot of blasting.

Q: So you were up all day?

<crew talk>

Q: So you were up all day on the 7th and then up all night on the 30 cal and then- then what'd you...

Stanley C. Blaker: And then-- well, we-- our barracks were full of bodies. I mean we can't come back to barracks, no way. Uh.. in fact, the- the blankets-- we had white wool blankets, you know, very good blankets in the Navy. And we had two of them a piece <clears throat>. And they-- <clears throat> when I'd got my blankets back, they'd been cleaned but they were blood stained. And uh.. I took them out of the Navy with me and we cut them up and left it-- crib blankets and everything and I don't think we got rid of them until just before we moved to <chuckles> Phoenix 30 years ago. I mean it's ridiculous but it's true. They're a very fine blanket. But the blood stains were still there. But they- they-- the mess hall, all the tables were covered with bodies. All of our barracks were covered with bodies. All of the- the Lanai was covered in bodies. We stayed in the hanger for roughly, I think, six days. And they came around with sandwiches and coffee three times a day. And that is what we ate. And we had- <chuckles> we had to sleep on those-- <chuckles> I got news for you, those cement floors are not very comfortable <laughs>.

Q: Did you have anything to-- did you have any blankets to use for yourselves?

Stanley C. Blaker: No. No, we just-- we left our clothes on and we slept in those.

Q: Did you have enough clothes or did you have to get new clothes issued or-- your clothes?

Stanley C. Blaker: Oh, no, no. Well, no. Well, we brought our clothes. You know, Navy, you buy your-- well, you know-- well, you're not in the enlisted bran-- <laughs> you don't know that <laughs>.

Q: But do you-- but- but as a result of the- the attack and-- did you have to go get new clothes?

Stanley C. Blaker: No, no, no. We- we-- our clothes were in our- our-- you know, in the barracks in our lockers. So that wasn't so bad. And they didn't give us new blankets. They gave us the old ones back again clean.

Q: Now, you were in the large barracks that were right next to the base theater and the clinic.

Stanley C. Blaker: Yeah, right. Right across the street from the dispensary which got the bomb right in the middle of it.

Q: Exactly, okay. I know exactly where you were. The hanger you were working in was that between the barracks and Hanger 1, which of course, is destroyed in the attack?

Stanley C. Blaker: I- I'm sorry. What was it?

Q: Okay...

Stanley C. Blaker: Nothing in the bar- barracks is destroyed.

Q: I understand. No, no, the hanger you were working, your duty bar-- your duty hanger where you were working, was it between the barracks and Hanger 1?

Stanley C. Blaker: Yes, right across from it. We- we were the hanger right across from it.

Q: I know it very well. Now, we're getting a little bit short on time, so what I wanna ask you is how do you feel coming back here to Pearl Harbor? How does...

Stanley C. Blaker: It- it gets harder every year, really.

Q: Have you been coming back regularly?

Stanley C. Blaker: Uh.. I think this is our sixth visit, uh.. uh.. sixth five year visit, yeah. We've gone to other ones in the States, but uh.. uh.. pardon me <laughs>, I shouldn't say that. I should say main side <chuckles>. But uh.. uh.. we come here every five years for the last 20, 25, 30 years, whatever it is.

Q: Mm-mm and what's- what's the most sort of poignant time for you during this visit?

Stanley C. Blaker: Uh.. I think probably tomorrow morning.

Q: And that'll be a visit to the Arizona Memorial?

Stanley C. Blaker: No, no, I'm not invited there. That's by invitation only. This will be at the Punch Bowl.

Q: Okay.

Stanley C. Blaker: Because the Punch Bowl is- uh.. is where we're- we're going. And usually, they had-- uh.. joint evening service at the- at the memorial and a morning service at the Punch Bowl. And we usually chose for the- the uh.. evening service. But this year, we have no choice.

Q: Is there anything you'd like-- anything else on a final note that you'd like to- to share with us?

Stanley C. Blaker: Well, uh.. the attack itself uh.. uh.. much you can say about it. Uh.. it- it was a disaster. It- it was a surprise, let's put it that way. Uh.. I- I blame, and I may-- I'm gonna say this without any- any real affliction on the organization, I think Roosevelt should have been token out the next morning and shot as a traitor. But that's my point. That's-- I think he was the worst thing that ever happened in the world or the United States. He wanted us in that war and the only way he could do it is was kill- kill 25-- 3,000 men. That's all and a lot of it. Uh.. they talk about New York. New York had about the same amount of casualties we did, almost. They're a little bit higher. Uh.. but their damage was done to private property. Ours was done to A- American property that the taxpayers have to pay for. And uh.. I don't know why they ever built the Missouri, for example. I mean uh.. there was no

reason for it. I mean it was a dead issue. Battle wagons were already dead
<chuckles> when they got-- the Iowa and the Missouri were built anyway.

<crew talk>

Q: Well, could you-- can you give us very briefly what your- your rest of your
Navy career after Pearl Harbor was? What did you...

Stanley C. Blaker: All right. I- uh.. I left, I think, it was May 13th. Well, uh..
after the trip, we-- well, I didn't tell you about that. Remember I told you
about that message drop? Uh.. we had an advanced base. Our crew went on
a- a-- to advanced base on Midway. And we didn't know what we were
looking for but we found out we were looking for the Hornet. And we used
that message drop to drop the latest pictures of Tokyo on the Hornet as she
was headed to bomb Tokyo.

Q: Ah.

Stanley C. Blaker: And uh.. uh.. then I came-- we came back from that- that
advanced base and we'd been flying every third day 12 to 14 hours. And we
had an overnight liberty at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel. And then the next day I
come back. And then still in my whites, I have to go on a bounce hop training
uh.. privates uh.. to land PBYS, you know. And- and it got very, very boring
over and over and over. So I came back from that- that flight. And I walked in
the radio shaft and I was looking for three volunteer radiomen to be
transferred west with one PBY. I raised my hand. They wouldn't tell us where
we were going, what we were going to do or anything, just we were going
west. So uh.. on the 13th of May, we took off and they announced-- the
skipper was flying the plane but he wasn't gonna stay and the co-pilot wasn't
gonna stay and the navigator, just the three megs [ph?] and the three
machinist's mate-- uh.. uh.. I mean three radiomen. And uh.. they announced
we were going to Auckland, New Zealand. Well, we got to Noumea and New
Caledonia and flew down to Auckland and flew Admiral Gormely [ph?] back to
<chuckles> to Noumea. And he was replaced by Hallsey [ph?] and we
became Admiral McCain's private plane. So a flag com air _____,
Commander Aircraft South Pacific Forces. And we were the first airplane to
land on Guadalcanal or take in territory for that mat-- the whole war. We
landed with- with a torpedo under each wing. We had 16 Marines in full battle
gear.

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[audio ends abruptly]

End of Tape 424 Stanley C. Blaker